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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0851
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: POLITICAL MOMENTUM INDICATES ELVIN SANTOS WILL
LIKELY BE ALLOWED TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 1073

[B](#). TEGUCIGALPA 1040

[C](#). TEGUCIGALPA 1034

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reason 1.4 (b & d)

[1](#). C) Summary Although powerful political figures tried their hardest to keep Vice President Elvin Santos from running for President, he was still able to win the primary elections with a stand-in candidate. Pundits and political rivals like President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya and President of the Congress Roberto Micheletti all are now all saying that Santos is the Liberal Party candidate and will eventually be allowed to run. We have encouraged all that any solution be both legal and constitutional. End Summary

Changing Their Minds

[1](#)2. (C) Despite all the political maneuverings by his presidential rivals, Vice President Elvin Santos was able to pull off a victory in the November 30 primaries with stand-in candidate Mauricio Villeda (refs A- C). President of the Congress Roberto Micheletti, who was soundly defeated, accepted his defeat on December 1, but initially reiterated that Villeda, not Santos, was the candidate. By December 6, however, Micheletti was singing a different tune, after holing up in his hometown of El Progreso with Santos for a day-long meeting. Even President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya has come forward to support Santos, telling the Ambassador in a private meeting on December 10 that "the people had spoken" and then saying publicly on December 12 that "Santos is the Liberal Party candidate."

How to Do It?

[1](#)3. (C) When the President said that Santos would be made the party candidate, he did not specify how the action would be accomplished. The Ambassador encourage that any moves should be made in accordance with the law and the Constitution. The papers are rife with speculation that the Congress would be called into session to "interpret" the Constitution in a new way, which would allow him to run. In a lunch with the Ambassador on December 14, Minister of Defense Aristides Mejia argued that a possible Constitutional interpretation was that since the 1982 Constitution only prohibits the

Presidential Designates from seeking the Presidency, not the Vice President, Santos was free to run. Many other political figures are asserting that Santos, resounding popular mandate clear the way for him to be recognized by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

Comment

14. (C) The popular physics of Elvin Santos, landslide victory over Congress President Micheletti has created a huge momentum for the Liberal Party to rally behind the Vice President's candidacy. In fact, it would be difficult for even the National Party to publicly oppose Santos, since it could lead to a citizen backlash. Certainly, the constitution can be interpreted in many ways and there are a number of cogent legal arguments for permitting Santos to seek the Presidency. For all these reasons, we will continue to stress behind the scenes that any move to allow Santos to run should be accomplished within the law and the Constitution. And because the Supreme Court has already ruled on his candidacy, we will also encourage them that in some way this needs to be dealt with in the courts, and not just with the Congress. End Comment.

LLORENS